

FACT SHEET Secondhand Smoke and Heart Disease, Lung Cancer, and Other Health Risks

Hawai'i State Department of Health

- Secondhand smoke, also called Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS), is recognized as the third preventable cause of death in the U.S., preceded by active smoking and alcohol consumption. [1]
- Secondhand smoke exposure at home, work, or both combined is associated with fatal coronary heart disease. [2] More than 35,000 heart disease deaths can be attributed to secondhand smoke. [3]
- Annually secondhand smoke is responsible for an estimated 3000 lung cancer deaths, 35,000 cardiovascular disease deaths, and 2,300 sudden infant deaths. [4]
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that annually, there are 26,000 new cases of asthma in children and 300,000 cases of bronchitis and pneumonia in children, which are directly attributable to second hand smoke. [3]
- There is a high risk for heart disease for non-smokers married to a current smoker. [2] Never smokers who are currently living with a smoking spouse have an increased 20% risk of a heart attack. [5]

Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke have many health risks including: [3]

Developmental

Low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Respiratory (children)

Bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, chronic respiratory problems, middle ear infections

Carcinogenic

Lung cancer, nasal sinus cancer

Cardiovascular - Heart disease

The negative effects of secondhand smoke on the heart are thickening of the carotid artery wall, dysfunction of endothelium, compromised exercise performance, changes in lipoprotein distribution, increased plasma fibrinogen, and increase platelet aggregation. [2]

Table Source: Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke. [3]

Tobacco Prevention & Education Program
1250 Punchbowl Street, Room 217 • Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone (808) 586-4613

REFERENCE:

1. Tobacco Control Update. (2000). *How to Use the Massachusetts Sanitary Code to Deal with ETS Incursion in Multi-Unit Dwellings*. Available: www.tobaccocontrol.neu.edu/TCU/tcu05.1/Features/how_to_use_the_massachusetts_san.htm [2001, 07/27/01].
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
3. National Cancer Institute. (1999). *Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke: The Report of the California Environmental Protection Agency. Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph no. 10* (NIH Pub. No. 99-4645). Bethesda, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute.
4. American Lung Association. (2002, October). *Secondhand Smoke*. Available: www.lungusa.org/air/air00_second.html [200, 07/21/03].
5. Action on Smoking and Health. (1996). *ETS Exposure Increases Heart Attack Risk 20%*. Available: ash.org/dangers/heartattack.html [2001, 07/27/01].